UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1828
9 February 1995

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Croatian Serb's self-declared parliament says it will freeze economic agreement between Croatian Government and Krajina Serbs unless UNPROFOR guarantees it will not withdraw from Croatia.

+ UNICEF Executive Board calls for plan of action based on the findings of management study; welcomes identification of areas where UNICEF can improve its performance.

+ Economic and Social Council approves procedures to allow European Community to participate fully in deliberations of Commission on Sustainable Development.

+ Draft protocol on greenhouse gas emissions reduction introduced at Negotiating Committee for Climate Change Convention.

+ Use of degraded land for producing livestock crops for bioenergy discussed in Committee on Renewable Sources of Energy.

+ DPI publishes An Agenda for Development and second edition of An Agenda for Peace in companion volumes; also publishes second volume in "blue books" series titled: United Nations and Cambodia - 1991-1995.

+ Cyrus Vance says international community can deal with conflicts through United Nations at fraction of cost nations spend to defend themselves; says United States has vital stake in Organization's peace-keeping efforts.

* * *

The Parliament of the Croatian Serb's self-declared and unrecognized state has passed a resolution saying it would "freeze" the economic agreement until a decision was made not to remove United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) from Croatia, a spokesman for the Organization said today. The agreement, which was signed by the Croatian Government and the Krajina Serbs on 2 December, covers water and electricity links, as well as the opening of a crucial highway and oil pipeline. The spokesman said the recently opened

For information media—not an official record

highway was still functioning and a demining exercise on the railway line was proceeding as scheduled.

Meanwhile, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation in Bihac continued to be quiet in the northern part of the enclave, where there had previously been considerable fighting and shelling, the spokesman said. However, UNPROFOR reported an infantry attack had been launched in the southern part of the Bihac pocket by Bosnian Serbs and heavy fighting was continuing. UNPROFOR described the fighting as a clear violation of the cease-fire agreement. It was attempting to contact both sides with a view to interpositioning Bangladeshi troops between the confrontation line.

* * *

The Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has called for a plan of action based on the findings of a management study of the Fund. Concluding its first regular session for 1995, the Board welcomed the study's recognition of UNICEF's achievements and strengths, and the identification of areas where its performance could be improved. The Board called upon the secretariat to ensure the active involvement of UNICEF's staff in the work of the task force which is being formed to implement the plan of action.

The Board also established an informal consultation of interested parties to facilitate its response to the the study's findings and asked the secretariat to identify priorities in three areas: actions which could be taken quickly without board involvement; those which needed further analysis and consultation; and those which required Board approval, especially for structural, financial and staffing issues.

UNICEF's mission in emergency situations was also discussed, with members calling for a balance between emergencies and longer-term actions. Acting Executive Director, Richard Jolly underscored the increasing security risks in countries facing emergencies. He said UNICEF was commited to developing a mission statement and a strategy paper on emergencies.

* * *

The Economic and Social Council has approved ways to allow the European Community to participate fully in the deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development. As it continued its current organizational session Wednesday, the Council adopted procedures allowing the Community the right to make statements, respond to questions, and introduce proposals and ammendments. It will also be able to raise a point of order when consultations among its member States were still continuing. Although the European Community would not have the right to vote, it will be able to submit proposals that could be put to the vote if requested by a Commission member.

* * *

(more)

A draft protocol on greenhouse gas emissions reductions was introduced Wednesday at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Committee is currently meeting in its final session before the Conference of the Parties to the Convention which will held in Berlin from 28 March to 2 April.

Introducing the draft on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago said the general commitments in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change were inadequate to address effectively the consequences of the greenhouse effect. She said the draft required that developed country parties to the Protocol, which were included in Annex I of the Convention, reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide by the year 2005 to a level at least 20 per cent below that attained in 1990.

* * *

Plantation production of fast-growing energy crops, which achieved sustainable high yields coupled with low environmental impact, could be a major potential energy source in the future. The expert from the Netherlands told the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development that such crops could be used as feedstock for producing bioenergy. The Committee was continuing its consideration Wednesday of the use of biomass for energy.

In tropical areas, more than one third of deforested or degraded land might be reforested through the use of biomass energy, he said. In developing countries, agriculture could be modernized and marginal-land use increased through the use of biomass to produce electricity. Potential feedstocks for generating biomass energy included municipal and industrial wastes in urban areas, and forest and plantation wastes in rural areas.

* * *

The Department of Public Information (DPI) has published Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's An Agenda for Development and the second edition of An Agenda for Peace in companion volumes. The two books are being published in all six United Nations languages. Their publication is part of the effort towards stimulating innovative thought and action at the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and throughout the Organization's fiftieth anniversary year.

Also just published by DPI, is the second volume in the "Blue Book" series, titled The United Nations and Cambodia, 1991-1995. It features an introduction by the Secretary-General, a detailed chronology of events and a comprehensive collection of historic United Nations documentation and other materials. For the first time, more than 100 documents relating to the peace process in Cambodia have been brought together in one volume.

The "blue books" cover major developments in international relations of the past five decades in which the United Nations has played a leading role.

(more)

Forthcoming titles include: The United Nations and Nuclear Non-Proliferation; The United Nations and El Salvador; The United Nations and Human Rights; and The United Nations and Mozambique.

* * *

The international community was able to deal with conflicts through the United Nations at a fraction of the cost of the vast military outlays that nations had undertaken to defend themselves in the past, Cyrus Vance told correspondents at Heardquarters today. Speaking as a representative of the United Nations Association of the United States, he said effective collective security was a bargain for citizens of all countries. After working in some intractible conflict areas on behalf of the United Nations, he said he could testify to the indispensible role the Organization played in maintaining peace and helping to forestall the escalation of conflicts.

The United States had a vital stake in the Organization's peace-keeping efforts, Mr. Vance stressed. Nothing served its national interests more than a strong United Nations peace-keeping system which was capable, reliable and effective in halting the slide toward war. He said that some provisions in legislation before the American congress could fatally handicap the Organization's peace-keeping and severely restrict United States involvement in the United Nations. It would place rigid restrictions on United States approval of United Nations peace-keeping missions and financial rules that could bankrupt such operations. If those restrictions had been put in place five years ago, the international community would have been severely hampered in its ability to fight the Persian Gulf war.

* *** *